

U.S.I.A. Confirms Role in Unattributed Pamphlets

By JOHN W. FINNEY
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WASHINGTON, March 21—The United States Information Agency said today that it had prepared pamphlets on the benefits of private oil exploration to be distributed in Ecuador by a Texaco-Gulf oil combine.

The agency also said that in Bolivia it had arranged for a cartoon booklet it produced on urban terrorism to be distributed by the Ministry of Information.

In both cases, the agency acknowledged, the material deliberately omitted any notation of who had prepared it.

In response to criticism from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the agency made public some of the cases in which it has distributed information in Latin America without clearly identifying the source as a United States Government agency.

Until the Senate committee acted, the practice of distributing unattributed information had been classified as confidential by the agency.

Senator J. W. Fulbright, the committee chairman, said the distribution of unattributed information raised serious questions whether the information agency was engaged in covert propaganda practices that would

not be tolerated under the law in the United States.

At a hearing on the information agency's budget, Senator Fulbright observed that under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, it is considered "offensive" if not illegal for foreign agents to distribute information in this country without clearly identifying it as the product of a foreign government.

According to officials, 148,000 copies of "El Desengaño" ("The Disillusionment") were printed a year ago at a time when the agency was concerned about rising urban terrorism in some Latin American countries.

The colored cartoon pamphlet tells the story of two friends, one who goes the terrorist route to seek social change and becomes disillusioned with the killing, the other who goes the route of a community development organization.

The copies, which carry no identification of origin, were sent to agency posts in 10 Latin American countries. The officials had no immediate information on whether the booklets were distributed by Government agencies in countries other than Bolivia.

The fact that the agency is

distributing unattributed information in some foreign countries, he said, raises a question whether the agency is conducting "an open, above-board operation" or "a propaganda program that it wants to keep secret."

Questioned on the Fulbright criticism, Frank Shakespeare, the agency's director, said in an interview that he found "considerable logic" in the Senator's argument that the agency should not distribute information that is not clearly identified, but he said he thought it would be "unrealistic" to lay down a "flat, unequivocal rule" against the distribution of unattributed information.

The general policy, Mr. Shakespeare said, is to identify information as prepared by the agency, but in some cases it is left to the judgment of "field officers" to distribute information on an unattributed basis.

"We are not a covert organization and do not operate as one," he said. "The overwhelming percentage of what we put out is attributed with a U.S.I.A. logotype."

Appearing before the Senate committee yesterday Mr. Shakespeare contended that all agency information was "attributable." Senator Fulbright asked why, then, the agency

had classified as confidential a list on unattributed information. In response, the agency declassified the list today.

A memorandum by the agency listed the following other cases in which the agency produced or assisted in the production of materials that were then distributed without attribution to the information service or agency.

An article by the British writer C. P. Snow on the population problem was reproduced in Spanish by the agency's regional service center in Mexico and distributed by the Dominican National Council on Population and Family.

In Ecuador, 4,000 copies of an English-language tourist guide, attributed to a taxi co-operative and a local center, was distributed by the taxi union.

Also in Ecuador, the agency produced 2,000 copies of a pamphlet for the International Transport Federation that was attributed to and distributed by the local transport workers' union.

In Paraguay, the agency assisted financially and editorially in the production of the journal of the Association of Paraguayan English Teachers. Three issues are published annually and distributed free.